

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06350 221702Z

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ACTION NODS-00

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R 221615Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1289

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6350

EXDIS

(DEPT TREAT AS NODIS)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: RELEASE OF U.S. ARMY OFFICER BY PLO

1. THE RSO, IN A MEETING WITH ABU JAAFAR OF PLO ON JULY 18 IN CONNECTION WITH SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AMERICAN CONVOY, WAS ASKED IF THERE WAS AN AMERICAN IN THE EMBASSY BY THE NAME OF WILLIAMS. WHEN THE RSO RESPONDED THAT THERE WAS NO ONE BY THAT NAME ASSIGNED TO THE EMBASSY, AUB JAAFAR STATED THAT FATAH SECURITY HAD PICKED UP AN AMERICAN JULY 15 WHO HE DESCRIBED AS AN AMERICAN WHO HAD ENTERED BEIRUT ON THAT DAY FROM SYRIA. AFTER DISCUSSING SECURITY FOR THE VONVOY, ABU JAAFAR STATED THAT IT WAS HIS DESIRE TO TURN THIS AMERICAN (LT. FRANK WILLIAMS) OVER TO THE RSO AND THAT HE SHOULD TAKE HIM TO THE EMBASSY. HE STATED THAT HIS SECURITY PEOPLE HAD OBJECTED TO RELEASING WILLIAMS SINCE THEY BELIEVED THAT HE WAS A SPY BUT ABU JAAFAR HAD OVERRULED SECURITY

Y
OBJECTIONS AND WAS PREPARED TO RELEASE HIM TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IMMEDIATELY.

2. HE SUGGESTED THAT WILLIAMS BE KEPT IN THE EMBASSY AND THAT HE SHOULD LEAVE LEBANON SOONEST POSSIBLY WITH THE AMERICAN CONVOY. THE DAO HAD CONFIRMED THAT WILLIAMS IS A 2D LT. WHO GRADUATED FROM WEST POINT THIS SPRING AND CAME TO LEBANON IN ORDER TO OBSERVE WARFARE FIRSTHAND. BE IS BEING HELD BY THE DAO AFTER COMPLETE DEBRIEFING IN THE CHANCERY PENDING THE DEPARTURE OF THE LAND
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CONVOY.

3. WILLIAMS WAS TOTALLY UNHARMED DURING THIS 3 DAYS IN FATAH CUSTODY. HE IS A NAIVE YOUNG MAN WHO EXHIBITS CONSIDERABLE CURIOSITY ABOUT THE LEBANESE SITUATION WITH NO APPARENT BACKGROUND ON THIS PART OF THE WORLD. HE HAD A MPA OF ISRAEL IN HIS POSSESSION AS WELL AS ISRAELI CURRENCY. IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT FATAH SUSPECTED HIM OF BEING AN ISRAELI AGENT AND IT IS PARTICULARLY NOTWORTHY THAT HE WAS RELEASED TO THE EMBASSY WITHOUT COMMENT OR PUBLICITY.

4. I HAVE ASKED THE DAO TO INFORM MILITARY AUTHORITIES IN EUROPE THAT ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL ON LEAVE SHOULD AVOID LEBANON DURING THIS PERIOD.
SEELYE

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